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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of
Herz, et al.
Application No. 09/690,046
Filed/Deposited: 16 October, 2000
Attorney Docket No. P0813.70015US01

DECISION

This is a decision on the petition filed on 8 September, 2010, to revive an application under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) as having been abandoned due to unintentional delay.

The petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is **GRANTED**.

**As to the Allegations
of Unintentional Delay**

The requirements of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) are the petition and fee therefor, a reply, a proper statement and/or showing of unintentional delay under the regulation, and, where applicable, a terminal disclaimer and fee.

BACKGROUND

The record reflects as follows:

Following the Examiner's second non-final rejection on 16 February, 2005, Petitioner filed on 19 August, 2005, a Notice of Appeal (with fee) pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §41.31(a).

Petitioner's further reply in the form of an Appeal Brief was due absent extension of time on or before 19 October, 2005.

However, Petitioner failed to reply timely and properly, and the application went abandoned by operation of law after midnight 19 October, 2005;

The Office mailed a Notice of Abandonment on 22 January, 2007;

On 8 March, 2007, Petitioner filed a petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.181 and averred, *inter alia*, a 21 February, 2006, timely reply in the form of an amendment over an 18 February, 2006, certificate of mailing, with a request and fee for extension of time to make the reply timely.

The record reflects Petitioner's filing of an amendment, however, the proper reply to Petitioner's Notice Appeal was an Appeal Brief (with fee), which Petitioner did not file.

Thus, Petitioner's suggestion that the Examiner misinterpreted the amendment as one after-final and not of right was in fact a misinterpretation/misappreciation of the reply requirement herein,

The petition was dismissed on 20 August, 2010.

On 8 September, 2010, Petitioner filed, *inter alia*, a petition (with fee) pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b), filed a reply in the form of a request for continued examination with a submission in the form of the previously filed amendment pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.114 and made the statement of unintentional delay.

The record (including the petitions filed on 10 September, 2007, and 8 September, 2010) does not necessitate a finding that the delay between midnight 19 October, 2005 (the date of abandonment), and 8 September, 2010 (the date of the filing of grantable petition), was not unintentional.

Rather, the Patent and Trademark Office is relying in this matter on the duty of candor and good faith of Petitioner/Counsel Steven J. Henry (Reg. No. 27,900) when accepting Petitioners' representation that the delay in filing the response was unintentional.¹

The availability of applications and application papers online to applicants/practitioners who diligently associate their Customer Number with the respective application(s) now provides an applicant/practitioner on-demand information as to events/transactions in an application.

Out of an abundance of caution, Petitioners always are reminded that those registered to practice and all others who make representations before the Office **must** inquire into the underlying facts of representations made to the Office and support averments with the appropriate documentation—since all owe to the Office the continuing duty to disclose.²

¹ See Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53160 and 53178, 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 88 and 103 (responses to comments 64 and 109)(applicant obligated under 37 C.F.R. §10.18 to inquire into the underlying facts and circumstances when providing the statement required by 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) to the Patent and Trademark Office).

² See supplement of 17 June, 1999. The Patent and Trademark Office is relying on petitioner's duty of candor and good faith and accepting a statement made by Petitioner. See Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53160 and 53178, 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 88

STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Congress has authorized the Commissioner to "revive an application if the delay is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to have been "unavoidable." 35 U.S.C. §133 (1994).³

The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) and (b) set forth the requirements for a Petitioner to revive a previously unavoidably or unintentionally, respectively, abandoned application under this congressional grant of authority.⁴

Unintentional delays are those that do not satisfy the very strict statutory and regulatory requirements of unavoidable delay, and also, by definition, are not intentional.⁴)

As to Allegations of Unintentional Delay

The requirements of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) are the petition and fee therefor, a reply, a proper statement of unintentional delay under the regulation, and, where applicable, a terminal disclaimer and fee.

It appears that the requirements under the rule have been satisfied.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, the petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is granted.

The instant application is released to the Technology Center/AU (TC/AU) 2492 for further processing in due course.

Petitioner may find it beneficial to view Private PAIR within a fortnight of the instant decision to ensure that the revival has been acknowledged by the TC/AU in response to this decision. It is noted that all inquiries with regard to status need be directed to the TC/AU where that change of status must be effected—that does not occur in the Office of Petitions.

and 103 (responses to comments 64 and 109)(applicant obligated under 37 C.F.R. §10.18 to inquire into the underlying facts and circumstances when providing statements to the Patent and Trademark Office).

³ 35 U.S.C. §133 provides:

35 U.S.C. §133 Time for prosecuting application.

Upon failure of the applicant to prosecute the application within six months after any action therein, of which notice has been given or mailed to the applicant, or within such shorter time, not less than thirty days, as fixed by the Commissioner in such action, the application shall be regarded as abandoned by the parties thereto, unless it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that such delay was unavoidable.

⁴ Therefore, by example, an unintentional delay in the reply might occur if the reply and transmittal form are to be prepared for shipment by the US Postal Service, but other pressing matters distract one's attention and the mail is not timely deposited for shipment.

Telephone inquiries regarding this decision may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3214—it is noted, however, that all practice before the Office is in writing (see: 37 C.F.R. §1.2⁵) and the proper authority for action on any matter in this regard are the statutes (35 U.S.C.), regulations (37 C.F.R.) and the commentary on policy (MPEP). Therefore, no telephone discussion may be controlling or considered authority for Petitioner's action(s).


/John J. Gillon, Jr./
John J. Gillon, Jr.
Senior Attorney
Office of Petitions

⁵ The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.2 provide:

§1.2 Business to be transacted in writing.

All business with the Patent and Trademark Office should be transacted in writing. The personal attendance of applicants or their attorneys or agents at the Patent and Trademark Office is unnecessary. The action of the Patent and Trademark Office will be based exclusively on the written record in the Office. No attention will be paid to any alleged oral promise, stipulation, or understanding in relation to which there is disagreement or doubt.